

1926

A pictorial history of the Florida hurricane, September 18, 1926

L. L. Tyler

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A Pictorial History

OF THE

FLORIDA Hurricane



FORTY-SEVEN VIEWS
and FIVE PAGES of
INFORMATION

The Proceeds from the Sale of this Book Will Go to
Members of

Co. A, 124th Inf.

HOLLYWOOD, FLA.

Who Lost Their Homes September 18
While on Duty

PRICE 50c.

WE THANK YOU

SEPTEMBER 18, 1926

Pizzo Coll
U.S.F.

Sam Fidd



A Pictorial History

Of The

FLORIDA Hurricane

SEPTEMBER 18, 1926

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Miami, Florida

Foreword



OW often, in the greatest sorrow the greatest courage is born, the greatest triumph achieved! So it has been with Miami and southern Florida, the playground of the world, in its disaster. Out of the West Indies, before dawn of September 18, 1926, a hurricane never before equalled on the continent in violence, swept inland and across the peninsular state as if to destroy all that man had wrought. Before the storm had ceased, man again was fighting back, caring for his own and all who suffered, building again the homes that unleashed elements had left a shambles. Much has been written, but unfortunately, exaggeration and conflicting reports have prevented those outside the storm area from obtaining a clear picture of the hurricane and its effects. The sole purpose of this booklet is to give the actual facts, concisely, with illustrations that form a permanent record of the greatest disaster in recent years. We are indebted to the American Red Cross, city officials and leaders in citizens' relief organizations for the facts here presented, as we have drawn on only the most reliable sources of information for reports.

The Effects of the Storm



ORIGINATING off the coast of Porto Rico, the tropical storm now known as the Florida hurricane, first attracted attention when it swept over Turk's Island, on the southeastern fringe of the Bahamas. There was little warning, however, that the most destructive gales in history were to strike the mainland.

With gathering force, the storm suddenly spanned hundreds of miles of open sea, to blast the lower east coast of Florida with winds that mounted steadily in strength until official observers estimated their speed at 130 miles an hour. In its fury, the sea was lashed into a towering, crashing torrent under blinding sheets of rain that dashed incessantly without seeming to fall.

From Key Largo almost to Palm Beach, 100 miles of America's Riviera received the full force of the storm. Veering slightly northward, it crossed the state, then turned to the upper Gulf of Mexico, skirting Pensacola and Mobile, finally dying out in southern Louisiana.

The following report, compiled from records of the American Red Cross, city and county officials and citizens' relief organizations, gives in statistical form some conception of Florida's total loss in this disaster:

Dead	372
Injured	6,381
Homeless persons	43,000
Families needing aid	17,884
Homes wrecked	8,600
Property damage	\$159,000,000

Fatalities in Miami alone numbered 110 and were later increased to 115 when five succumbed to injuries from the storm. The greatest loss of life, however, was in the town of Moore Haven, on the southwestern shore of Lake Okeechobee, where flood waters brought the toll up to 126 in a community that had but few more than 600 residents at the last official census.

Fifteen lost their lives on Miami Beach, while 22 bodies were recovered from Hialeah, northwest of Miami. Approximately half of those killed in the hurricane in the Miami district were trapped on boats in the bay, more than 500 craft having been wrecked or sunk in these waters during the storm.

To add to the tragedy, those who had the least suffered most. The small, lightly constructed buildings of outlying sections housing thousands of Miami's wage earners, were ripped from their foundations, unroofed and in many cases leveled to a mass of debris. It was in these and in houseboats that the greatest number of fatalities occurred. Few of these were insured.

Mayor E. C. Romfh of Miami estimated that 75 per cent. of the 150 hotels in Miami, Miami Beach and Coral Gables were not damaged seriously, while 70 per cent. of the 1,200 apartment buildings in this area suffered but slightly. All of these, he believes, will be completely repaired and in first class condition within 60 days.

At Hollywood, with 3,000 homeless, and Fort Lauderdale, with 4,800 in need of shelter, the same conditions were found, although, proportionately, the number of buildings damaged was, perhaps, the largest on the east coast. The Hollywood Beach hotel stood the full force of the storm, waves breaking against its foundations, but did not weaken. Water reached a depth of three feet as far back as the Hollywood Golf & Country club before beginning to recede, equalling in area and depth the temporary inundation of Miami Beach.

All public utilities were out of operation for about 24 hours. By Monday, however, electric power had been supplied to a few of the most important points in the downtown Miami district, limited transportation was provided and the water supply was rapidly being placed in order. Drawing workmen from all parts of the south, this service was extended from day to day in one of the most remarkable "come-backs" of the disaster.

Emergency hospitals in hotels, churches and office buildings, with volunteer staffs, cared for the injured so efficiently that few suffered for lack of prompt medical attention. Vigorous enforcement of sanitary measures averted the ravages of disease that so often have followed such catastrophes. Fire departments of the various cities also performed heroic work in preventing an outbreak of fire in the debris.

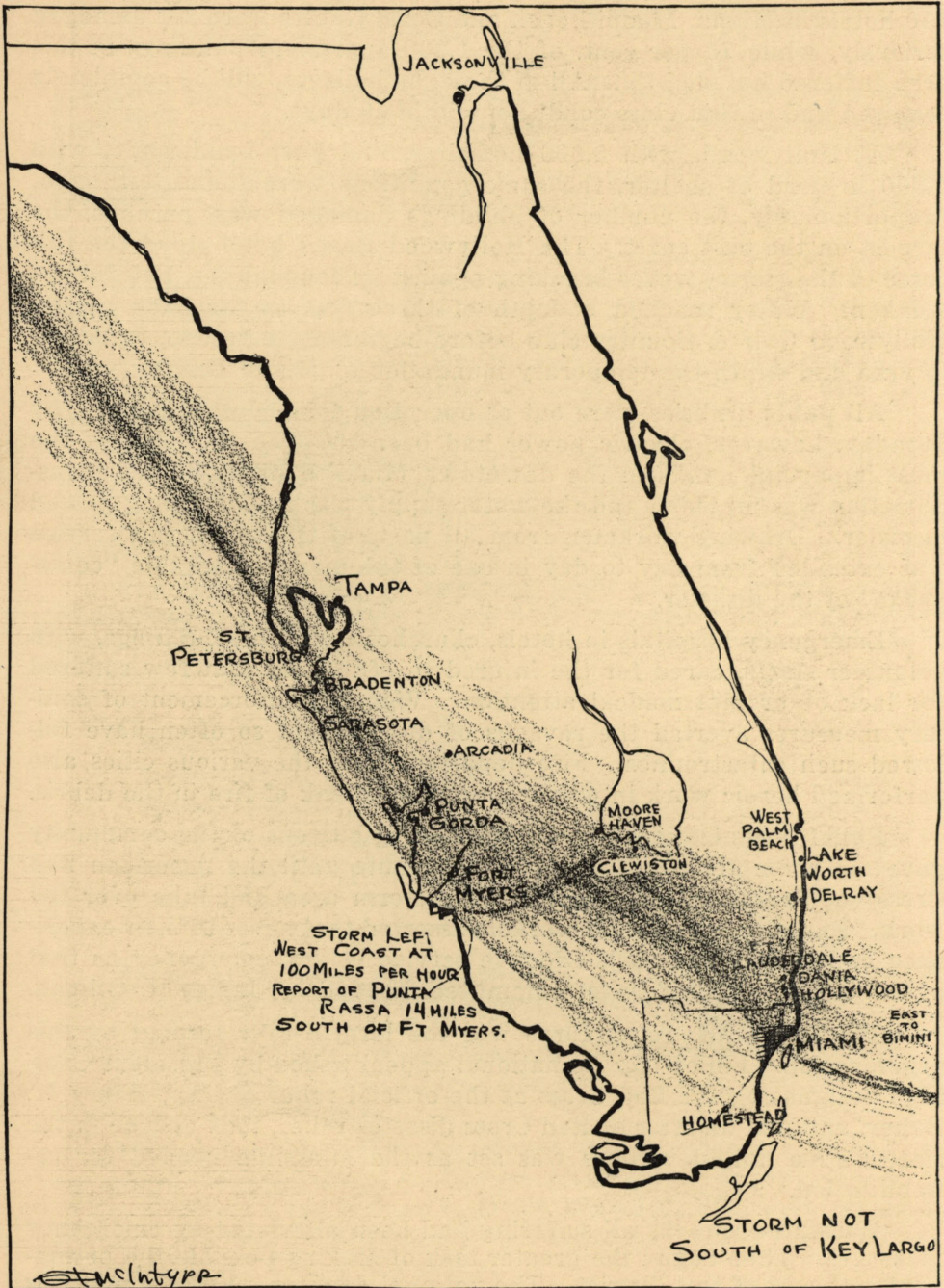
Relief organizations formed by leading citizens of the community gave aid promptly to all who were destitute until the American Red Cross could assemble its forces in the storm area and take over the work. Experienced disaster workers asserted that never in their experience had they found such effective service in any emergency as that of the Miami citizens' relief committee, headed by James H. Gilman.

The Red Cross relief force was the largest ever formed by this organization. Following the national appeal issued by President Coolidge designating the Red Cross as the official relief agency, Henry M. Baker, national director of Red Cross disaster relief, took charge in the state. Five million dollars was set as the minimum needed for rehabilitation.

Within two weeks all suffering had been alleviated by emergency measures. Then began the greater task of making possible the permanent recovery of this district. The national director estimates that this work will not be completed in much less than one year, because of the extensive nature of the project.

In less than one month, however, most of the marks of the storm were gone and south Florida was back at work, harder than ever, ready to resume its place as "the playground of the world."

Map of Florida



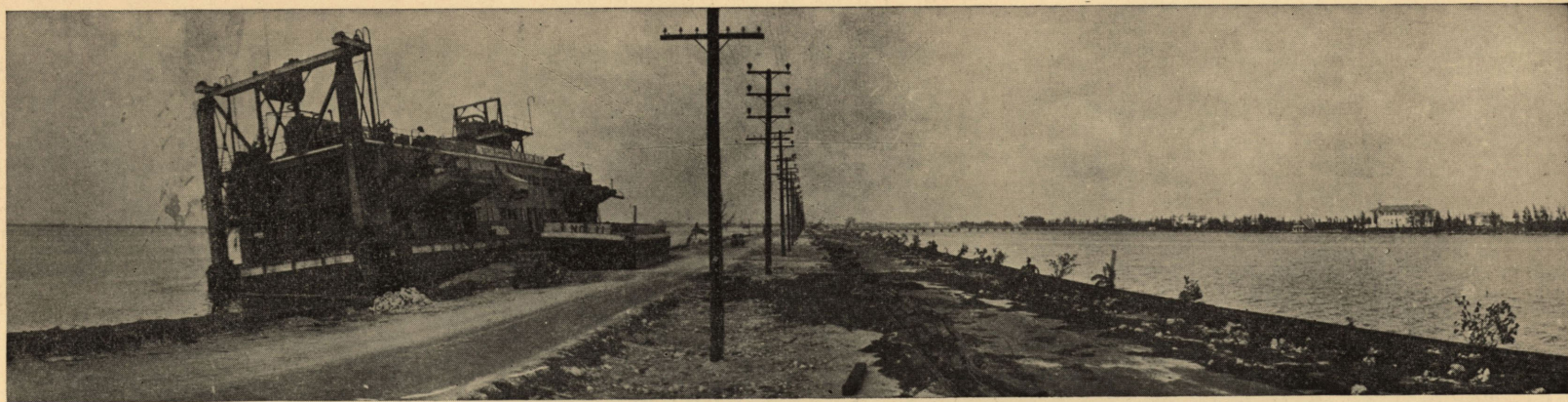
Path of the Storm

Complete course of the most devastating hurricane that ever struck the mainland of the United States is shown on the above map, prepared from government charts. Originating in the West Indies, it swept from the lower islands of the Bahamas straight toward the lower east coast of Florida, across the peninsula and veering northward in the Gulf of Mexico to a point near Pensacola, finally spent its force and disappeared in Louisiana. The wind velocity reached 130 miles an hour and the barometer fell to 27.64, the lowest on record.



The Meyer-Kiser Building
The only large down-town building seriously damaged.

Miami Views



View of the County Causeway

Showing the largest electric dredge in the world. Street car rails belong in the center of the roadway.



Flagler Street Bridge

All of the bridges over the Miami River withstood the storm.

Miami Views



Royal Palm Park

Showing new Ingraham Building under construction and McAllister Hotel at extreme right.



Another View of Royal Palm Park

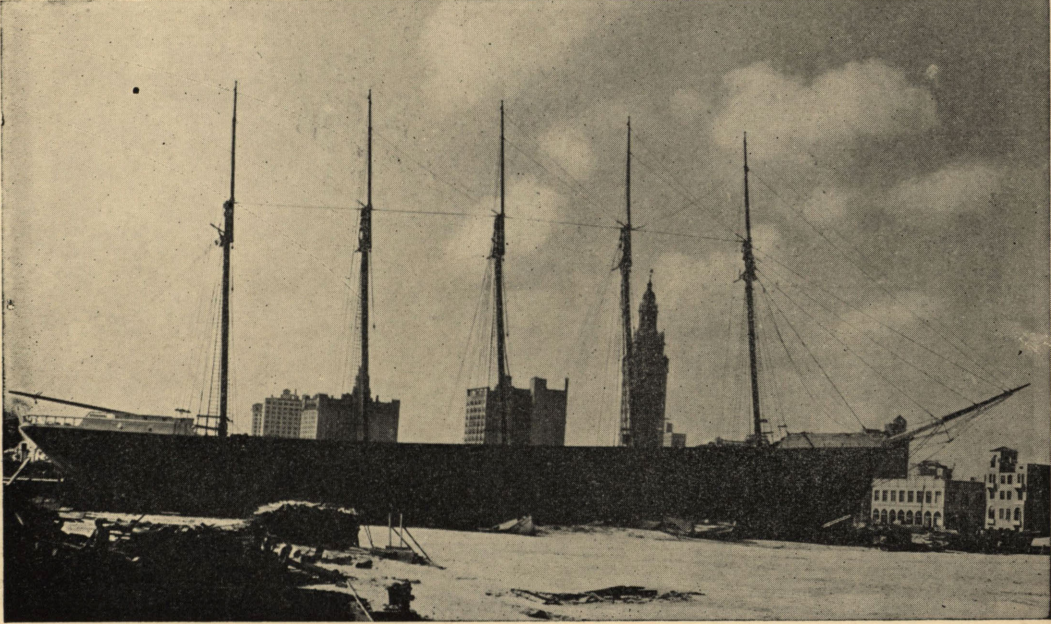
Showing boats high and dry on the horse shoe courts.



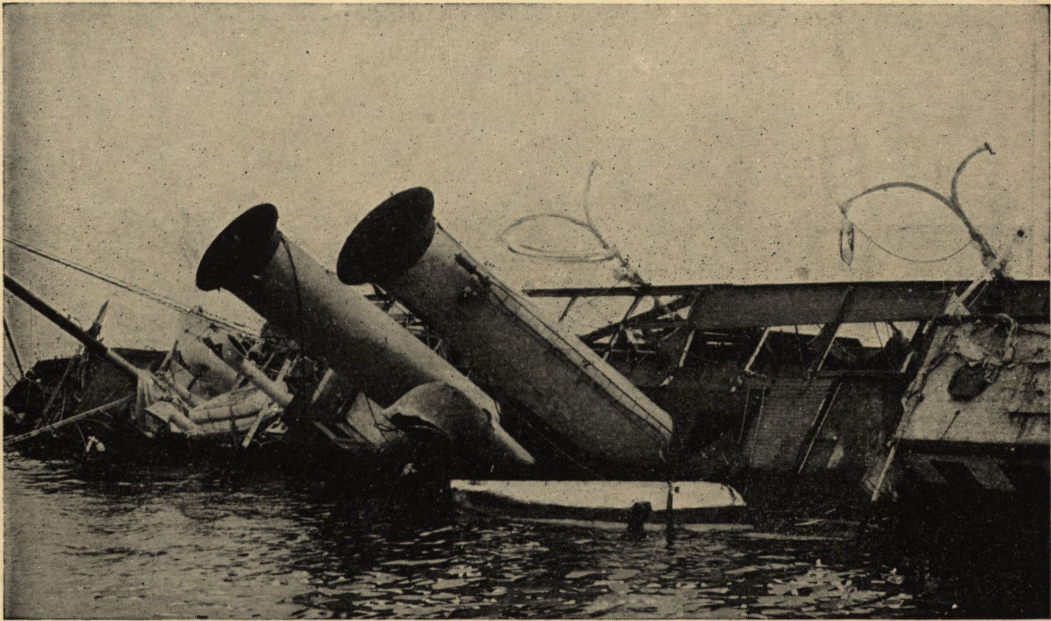
West Flagler Street at Twelfth Avenue
Sunday morning, September 19, 1926. Officer in boots on duty.



Looking West on Flagler Street
Traffic heavy as usual.



The Modern Schooner Rose Mahoney
Biscayne Boulevard hotels and News Tower in the background.



Wreck of Steam Yacht Nohab
Formerly the property of Kaiser Wilhelm.



O'Brien's Grocery Store, N. E. Second Avenue
Now open for business.



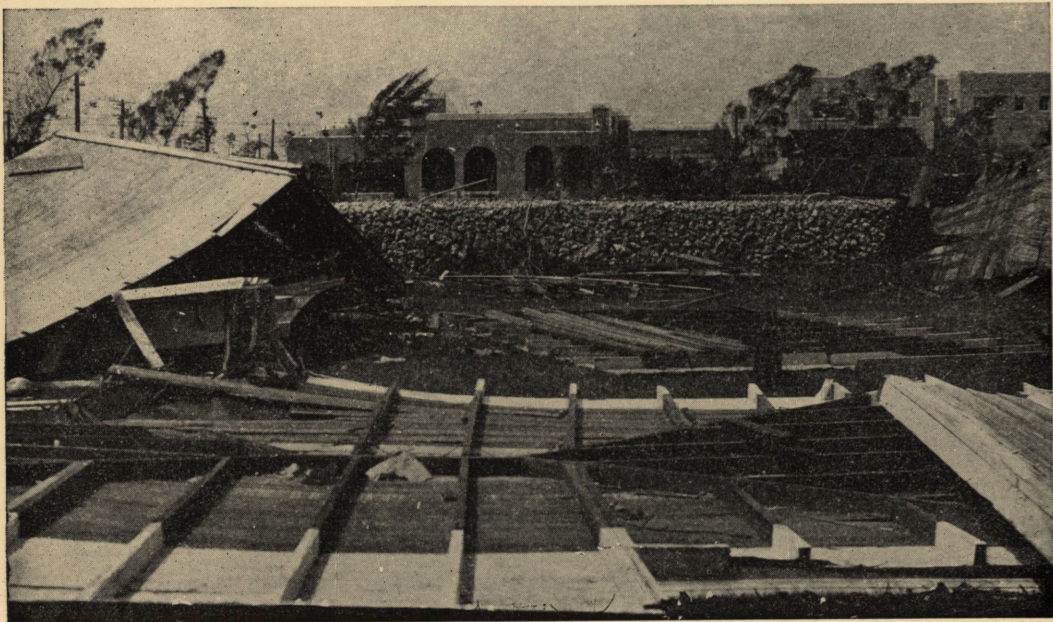
Another Miami Grocery
Note the customers.



The Tug Escort
Parked on Biscayne Boulevard at a red curb.



Ku Klux Klan Building
One of the few Miami Buildings that is condemned.



Remains of a Miami Residence

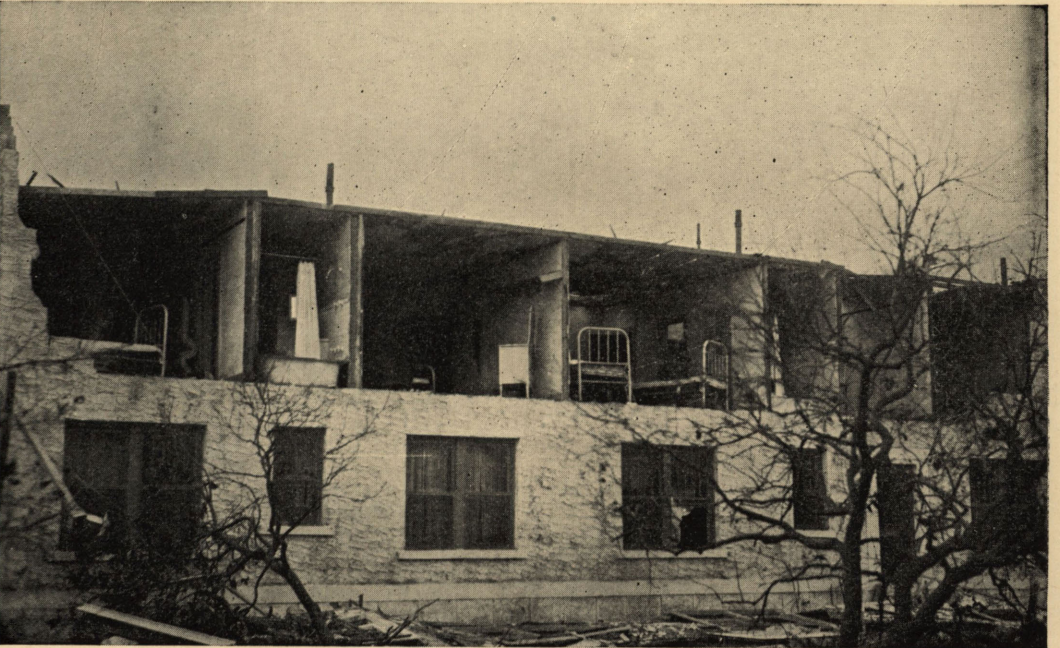
This is what happened to the hastily built homes.



A Scene in Buena Vista
Business is good here.



A Miami River Canal Scene
Many house boats were demolished.



A Miami Apartment House
This apartment house is now reconstructed and occupied.



A Miami Drug Store
No curb service here.



Foundation Pit for Athletic Club
Autos were swept into this pit.



A Scene in Little River

Much damage was done in the outskirts of greater Miami.



Scene on Tamiami Trail

McFarland's Awning Company badly damaged.



Collins Home on North Beach
Many beautiful homes were damaged by the hurricane.



Pancoast Hotel
One of Miami Beach's beautiful hotels.

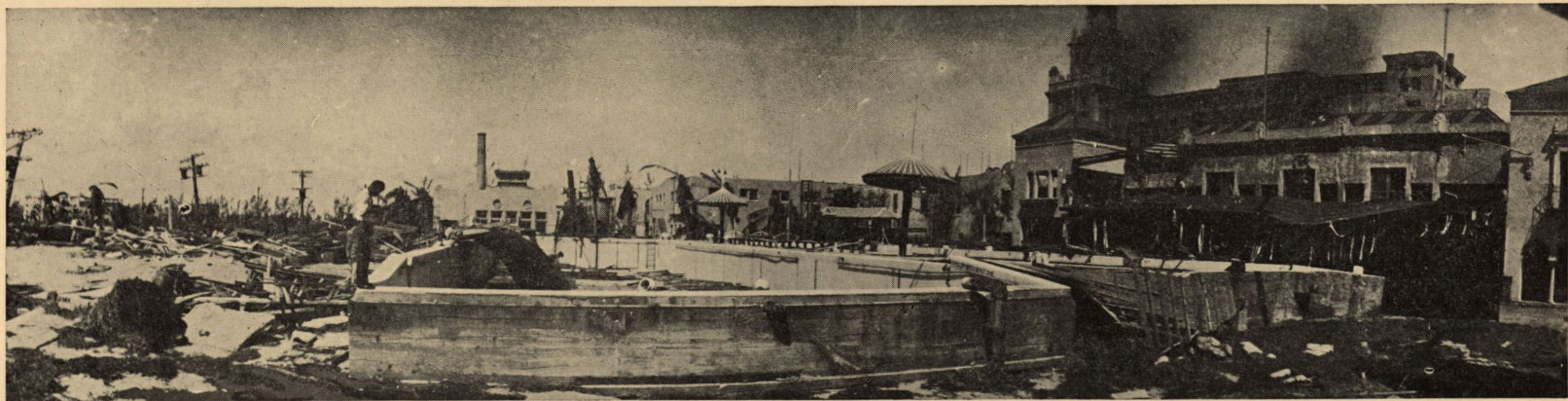


Smith's Cottages
Badly damaged.



Quigg's Miami Beach Store
Open for business Saturday noon.

Miami Beach Views



Roman Pools
Roney Plaza Hotel in the background.



A Scene on South Beach
Miami's Coney Island.

Miami Beach Views



Ocean Drive
The stars and stripes still wave.



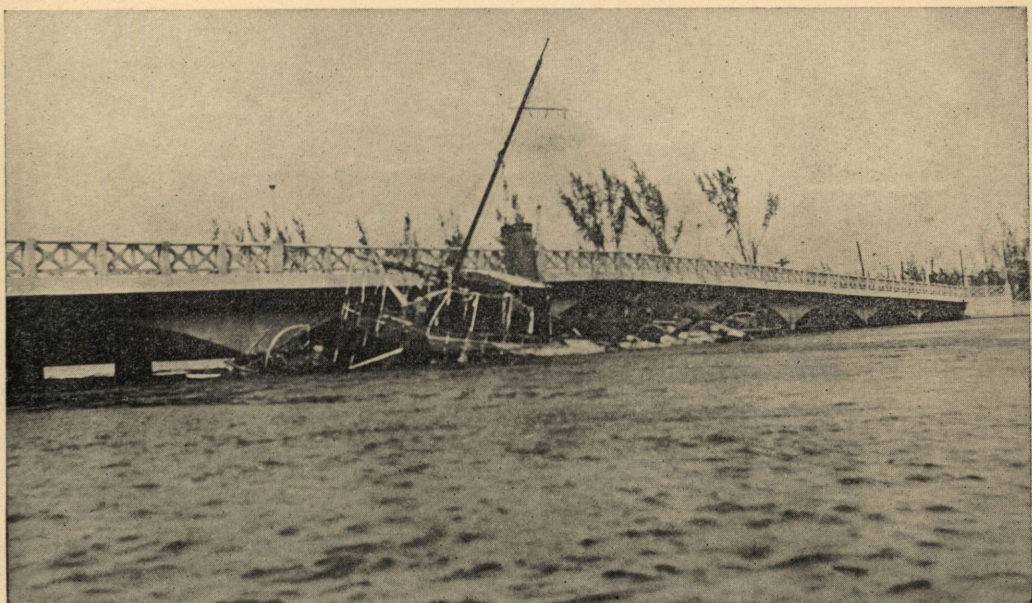
Another Ocean Drive View
Casinos shown in picture will be open for winter visitors.



Million Dollar Pier
Expected to be finished this year.



Collins Avenue
Sand is two feet deep.



Venetian Way Viaduct
Open for traffic.



Biscayne-Collins Hotel
Slightly damaged, but now reconstructed.



Hollywood Post Office
Completely demolished.



Hollywood Beach Scene
Soon will be back to normal.



Looking North on the Dixie
Road is passable now.



Hollywood Scene
Venice has nothing on us.



Dania High School.
Kids are glad.



M. E. Church at Hollywood
Four refugees from storm perished here.

Miami Spirit Wins



ENGAGED in his 101st disaster relief task, T. R. Buchanan, director of the Miami area for the American Red Cross, remarked that never in his experience had he witnessed such rapid recovery from a catastrophe.

This tribute applies not only to Miami, but to practically the entire district that was devastated by the Florida hurricane. With the exception of Moore Haven, where waters overflowing from Lake Okeechobee remained at flood stage, food, clothing, medical aid and temporary shelter were provided for the destitute within two weeks and permanent rebuilding was under way.

Reconstruction of homes for some 18,000 families who were unable financially to assume this burden was a task sufficient to stagger even the most courageous, but the job was undertaken without flinching. When generous donations from other parts of the nation were checked by conflicting reports as to the true situation, those who knew conditions increased their efforts instead of becoming discouraged.

The thousands who suffered, but were able to restore their own homes, contributed to aid less fortunate neighbors. Day and night, with little sleep, all worked until they had not only relieved the suffering, but to an amazing extent had effaced the traces of the storm.

Within one week, repairs had been started on all of the large hotels in Miami Beach. All will be ready as usual for the throngs of winter tourists.

Few large buildings were seriously damaged. The 17-story Meyer-Kiser bank building, the only completed structure of skyscraper proportions in Miami that was structurally unequal to the test, is being rebuilt to withstand even stronger gales than the 130-mile an hour hurricane.

Organized labor gave much free service to destitute families during the emergency period. The Miami Contractors' association performed all rebuilding work at cost in such cases. Volunteer crews rapidly patched roofs and made habitable hundreds of dwellings. In Hialeah, a force of 300 carpenters, 150 mechanics and 150 laborers made a record of completing 112 wrecked homes in one day, working from 14 to 16 hours. Free transportation was given by the Florida East Coast railway in bringing to the hurricane area 1,900 negro workmen. The city of Miami spent \$500,000 in clearing up hurricane debris.

Within one week, telephone service had been restored to 3,000 subscribers and 1,000 men were at work completing repairs. Telegraph service was opened, subject to delay in transmission, within a few days, and was restored to normal by temporary repairs within a week. Twenty crews of linemen were kept busy extending electric power to all parts of the city until full service could be offered.

As rebuilding got under way, the movement for a bigger and better city took definite form. Fifty tourist camps, representing the poorest type of construction in the district and previously tolerated because of the rapid growth of the city, were condemned and higher standards of building enforced.

Although such a hurricane was never known before and there was slight probability of a recurrence, the determination to build better than before was apparent throughout the storm area. Beauty is not forgotten. Landscaping, with the palms and brilliant shrubbery of the semi-tropics, is being restored, more than 75 per cent. surviving. Soon the land of flowers will have covered the last trace of its tragedy.

Reconstruction



Reconstruction Camp
Putting up homes for workers.



Typhoid Vaccination Station
One of many stations for disease prevention.

Relief Station



Relief Station at Gesu Cathedral

One of the first to dispense free coffee and food.

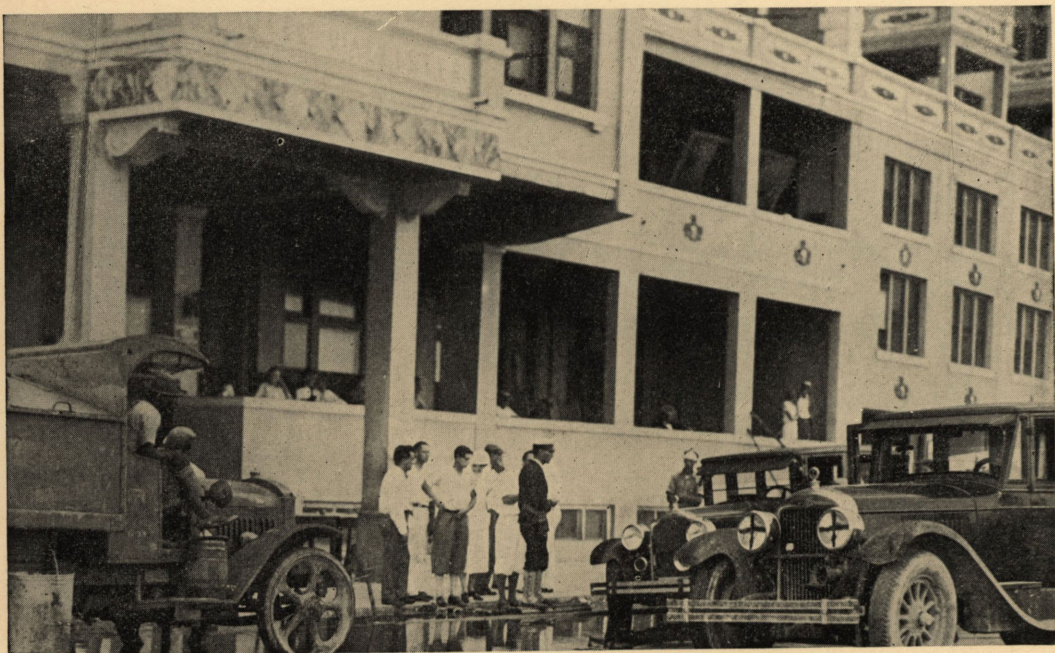


Uprighting Box Cars

Florida East Coast Railroad didn't lose any time putting their equipment in order.



Reconstruction Scene at Miami
It doesn't take long when everyone works.



McAllister Hotel
One of the many first aid stations.



Rebuilding
Everyone hard at it.



Fleetwood Hotel Red Cross Station
Trucks rolling where Rolls-Royce rolled.

Florida's Future

"I want to give positive assurance that our friends will find Miami this winter the same enjoyable, hospitable, comfortable vacation city it has always been.

"I predict that Miami will make a world record come-back. The people here have the enthusiasm, the will to do, an unshaken faith in the future of this great city. It is the same people who have created the fastest growing city in America who are now turning their energies and enthusiasm to the work of reconstruction in Miami."

So wrote Mayor E. C. Romfh, of Miami, six days after the hurricane that had appalled the world.

Already his promises have been, in a large measure, fulfilled. One month sufficed for this prodigious city of the Southland to resume its normal, which is to say, rushing business. Storm sufferers were being rehabilitated as rapidly as possible and new enterprises were being launched.

Through its chambers of commerce and other civic agencies South Florida was telling the world that it not only was coming back, but was ready once more to prove its claims of being the fairest land on the continent and the playground of the world.



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